DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 231 857 TM 830 403

AUTHOR Stake, Bernadine Evans; And Others
TITLE The Use of Surveys in a Responsive Evaluation: Evaluation of a National Sex Equity Demonstration Project.
PUB DATE Apr 83
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (67th, Montreal, Quebec, April 11-15, 1983).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Attitudes; *Demonstration Programs; Elementary Secondary Education; *Evaluation Methods; *Formative Evaluation; Item Sampling; Responses; *Sex Fairness; Student Attitudes; *Surveys; Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS Broward County Public Schools FL; Responsive Evaluation

ABSTRACT

During the last 2 years (1980-82), selected schools in the Broward County School District in Florida participated in the National Sex Equity Demonstration Project (NSEDP) to create a model for demonstration of curricular materials, educational practices, and program arrangements that feature gender-fair instruction and associated educational activities. Most activities were directed at staff development for teachers and administrators. The Center for Instructional Research and Curriculum Evaluation (CIRCE) at the University of Illinois provided internal evaluation of the Broward County project with a formative, responsive, naturalistic evaluation design with multiple methods of data gathering, particularly observation, interviews, and document reviews. Perception survey responses by students, teachers, principals, and others were also used to describe the social context and impact of the program. Item sampling was used to reduce the time needed from each respondent. The perception surveys examined: (1) the importance of the discrimination problem; (2) what educators should be doing; (3) teacher readiness to pursue equity; (4) local educators' present efforts; and (5) what had been accomplished. First and second year findings in project and nonproject schools are discussed. (CM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED231857

THE USE OF SURVEYS IN A RESPONSIVE EVALUATION: EVALUATION OF A NATIONAL SEX EQUITY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT*

Bernadine Evans Stake
James A. Pearsol
Robert E. Stake
Laura K. Morgan

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
B.E. Stake
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 1983. Montreal, Canada.

TM830403

Printed in U.S.A.

THE USE OF SURVEYS IN A RESPONSIVE EVALUATION: EVALUATION OF A NATIONAL SEX EQUITY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT*

Bernadine Evans Stake, James A. Pearsol, Robert E. Stake and Laura K. Morgan
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

During the last two years (1980-82) selected schools in the Broward County School District (Fort Lauderdale, Florida) have participated in The National Sex Equity Demonstration Project (NSEDP). Staff work is coordinated through the University of Miami. The purpose of the project is to create a model for demonstration of curricular materials, educational practices, and program arrangements that feature gender-fair instruction and associated educational activities.

The expectation of course is that these activities will improve the education of students, but because most activities here were directed at staff development for teachers and administrators, and because people from other school districts were expected to visit and observe Broward's efforts, evaluation activities were oriented more to changes in educators than changes in students.

We of CIRCE at the University of Illinois hold a subcontract with the University of Miami to provide internal evaluation of the implementation of the Broward project. Our evaluation design is formative, responsive, and naturalistic. We emphasize observation but use multiple methods of data gathering, particularly interview and document review. In addition, our evaluation plan called for perception scaling--similar to attitude scaling--to help us describe the social context, process and impact of the program. Perceptions of sex equity activities in the schools were obtained from students, teachers, principals and others.

---

* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 1983, Montreal, Canada.

In this evaluation study, respondents to perception surveys have helped detail program action. Different groups have been asked what they "see" happening in the schools. The construction of the scales was organized to help the staff of the NSEDP better understand the culture of the schools in which they were working. As you know it is more common for evaluators to use scales to record personal change or direct impact. Here in Broward County we have used item responses more as a way of "observing" the practices and events of the program. As such, the responses serve a descriptive function more than a testing function. They of course are supplemented by data obtained through interviews and observations. This is not entirely a novel use of questionnaires but we do feel that school personnel are insufficiently used as "informants."

In our evaluation plan, item sampling was used to reduce the time needed from each respondent. Items were distributed across forms, and forms were given to respondents at random. Item sampling has enabled us to cover a large pool of questions in five or ten minutes of teacher or pupil time. In so doing we of course gave up the item correlation information that some investigators emphasize.

All teachers in all project schools completed scales. Teachers in non-project schools were sampled by school. Roughly 15% of all non-project schools in Broward County were randomly selected each year. But principals of all 150 county schools participated. Teachers response rates ranged from a low of 33% (quite disappointing) to a high of 94%.

During the two years about fifty items were written. Instruments of three to twenty items were administered on numerous occasions, sometimes weekly. Some 6,000 students, 1,000 teachers, 150 administrators, and a few parents have responded. About seven items were answered by all respondents.

These items were not meant to aggregate to provide scale scores representing some psychological construct. Each item represents a respondent perception important to us. For example: Item #2 on your handout,

"As you see it, what are your school's teachers and administrators now doing?"

A. ____Most are not concerned about his issue.
B. ____Most watch for problems but seldom get involved.
C. ____Most try to eliminate sex role stereotyping.
D. ____Most believe boys and girls should be treated differently.

Grouped responses to this item taken at different time intervals provide an indication of perceived level of staff initiatives to deal with sex role stereotyping in schools.

Items were developed and pilot-tested to obtain information in the following five categories:

1. How important is the discrimination problem?
2. What should teachers (educators) be doing?
3. How ready are teachers to pursue the equity aims?
4. What is the present effort of local educators?
5. What has been accomplished?

For our first category we needed items indicating how much--in a global sense--people see social pressure for sex-role conformity as possibly diminishing educational opportunity and limiting life aspirations. We needed to know whether or not people saw sex-discrimination as a problem for society, particularly in education. One of the best items we developed is Item #1 on your sheet:

In the schools of this district--as you see it--how much are each of the following interfering with students getting a good education?	A lot	A little bit	Not at all	No opinion
6. Racial Discrimination	___	___	___	___
7. Discrimination according to sex	___	___	___	___
8. Bilingual problems	___	___	___	___
9. Overemphasis on testing	___	___	___	___

This item directs attention to a momentous instrumentality, an effect on the whole of a youngster's education. If respondents take it seriously,

when they check "A Lot" or "Little Bit" they will be stating that the issue is enormously important. By checking "Not At All" they do not indicate that the issue is unimportant, for they could see the discrimination as serious but not determining life outcomes. For them, somehow the discrimination may-be overcome, or of lesser instrumentality, than what is called for in the item, or perhaps the discrimination is more a matter of immorality or unfairness. Thus the item is not fine-tuned to indicate objections to sex discrimination, but is intended to discover a perception of momentous influence in the outcomes of schooling.

There are valid objections to raising simplistically (as we do here) several complex and serious difficulties with which the schools are faced. A respondent's attitudes toward sex equity and the other three matters cannot accurately be indicated by a few check marks. Yet it seems important to try to understand a little of the perceived seriousness of the sex-equity problem in the context of other concerns. (And by not asking questions unless we ask perfect questions we might suggest to people that the questions are not important enough to ask. It seemed important here to try.)

We know that many respondents will not respond seriously and literally to this and other items. Some will be looking for whatever opportunity to express their support or opposition to sex equity advocacy or something about the project they feel strongly about. This Item #1 required a more-than-usual discerning response to carry out that "ramrod" purpose. Hasty responses are less likely to misrepresent actual estimates of instrumentality because of the presence of the comparison lines in the item.

For each of the suggested obstacles to good education a median for the subgroup was calculated, subgroups such as all <u>female</u> teachers in <u>project</u> high schools. Scores of 0 for "Not At All," 50 for "A Little Bit," and 100 for

"A Lot" were assigned to provide an ordinal scale for calculation of the medians. This Item #1 was used in the 1980-83 evaluation work. Results for 1983 are not yet available.

In the late spring of 1981 the item was presented to the teachers of the four Nova schools, then the only schools affiliated with the project, and also to all teachers in 14 other Broward schools: eight elementary, three middle, and three high schools. Participation rate was about 75%. The results for all teachers in these 18 schools are shown in Table 1 of your handout.

TABLE 1--Results from Item #1 in Project and Nonproject Schools
Spring 1981

Following are medians for each interference-- ALL TEACHERS		In the schools of this district--as you see it--how much are each of the following interfering with youngsters getting a good education?	Mark	Pts.
			A = A lot	(100)
			B = A little bit	(50)
			C = Not al all	(0)
			D = No opinion	
36	#1.1	Racial discrimination		
20	#1.2	Discrimination according to sex		
38	#1.3	Bilingualism		
49	#1.4	Overemphasis on testing		
48	#1.5	Ineffective teaching		

According to the medians at the left, sex discrimination was seen as the least of the five obstacles. With a median of 20, more than half the teachers had to be saying that Sex Discrimination was "Not at all" an interference to youngsters getting a good education in Broward schools. But still, our tallies showed that 15% of these teachers said that sex discimination was interfering "A lot." We found most of these teachers to be in the project schools.

When we broke out the project school and nonproject school teachers we found the medians shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2--Project School Teachers vs. Non Project School Teachers
Item #1

Interference from:	Project	Non Project
Racial Discrimination	37	35
Sex Discrimination	33	18
Bilingualism	45	35
Overemphasis on testing	53	47
Ineffective teaching	47	48

At this testing, at the close of the first implementation year, the project teachers indicated a greater awareness of sex discrimination as an obstacle to education. It is possible that the project was responsible for this sensitization, but we have other evidence to suggest that teachers in these project schools were already rather sensitive to sex stereotyping issues when the project began--that was one of the reasons the demonstration project was set up there. By no means could it be said that a majority of the Nova teachers felt that there was a sex equity problem in his/her own school. They said there was a problem, but that it was someplace else. The project staff was saying "But it's everywhere."

It probably should be noted that in the process of increasingly being sensitized to sex discrimination, the project teachers were being exposed to evidence of discrimination according to race and cultural background as well.

Breaking the spring 1981 data out for level of school we found the results of Table 3.

TABLE 3--School Level

Interference from:	Elem	Midl	High
Racial Discrimination	40	39	26
Sex discrimination	22	19	17
Bilingualism	31	45	38

TABLE 4--Teacher Gender

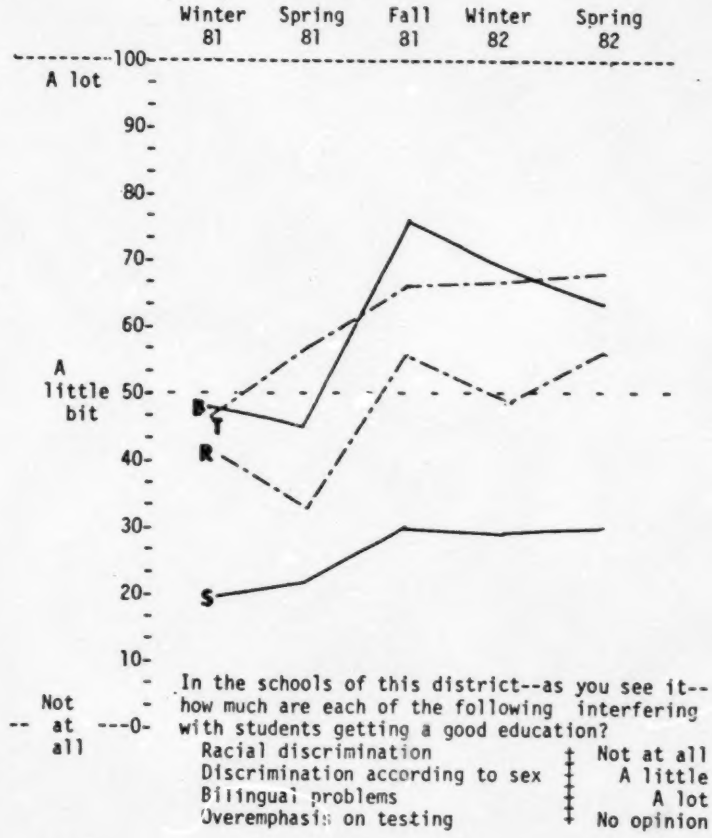
Female	Male
25	13

A precise error metric is not available in such an analysis, but it seemed to us that the sex equity differences by school level were negligible here. Later and with many other items, the importance of the "sex equity problem" was seen by teachers to diminish as we moved up from teachers of the lower grades to higher. That is, high school teachers saw sex discrimination less a problem.

As is shown in Table 4, female teachers more than male teachers saw interference to good education from sex discrimination in the schools.

Now for some results from students. In the winter of 1981, 213 tenth-grade student at Nova High School responded to the same item. See Figure 1. With the students too, sex discrimination was seen as much less an obstacle to good education than the other three ("ineffective teaching" was not included here). At the outset, the modal response indicated that sex discrimination was not an obstacle at all. During subsequent semesters there was a gradual increase in the response that it was an obstacle. The regularity of the plot suggests reasonably good reliability. By the end of the plot the modal response was that "sex discrimination" is "a little bit" of an interference. (The responses from the 1981-82 year were from some 100+ students.) It is to be noted in Figure 1 that all four obstacles were increasing over the year-and-one-half of measurement. Students also seemed to generalize sensitivity to discrimination. Sex

FIGURE 1



remained consistently seen as the least obstructing of the four. Over the period these Nova student medians increased about to the level of their teachers (32).

PRESENT EFFORT

For another category of questions, "What is the present effort of local educators," we developed items to indicate how people perceived the actions of their colleagues with regard to sex equity. An important feature of this next item (Item #2 on your handout) is the distinction made between active and passive roles in dealing with sex role stereotyping. (In still another item we asked what educators should do.)

On the instrument both items were preceded by an explanation of what sex role stereotyping is:

> "Sex role stereotyping" is a name given to expectations that there are certain ways girls should behave differently from boys, and certain ways boys should behave differently from girls.
>
> Some people complain that "sex role stereotyping" helps keep youngsters from being the independent persons they would like to be--or from taking courses, or from extracurricular activities they would enjoy, or even from challenging careers.
>
> Some people feel that sex role stereotyping is a problem because it diminishes the dignity of individual persons.
>
> Others feel that it is important in school to teach the separate roles for boys and girls. Others say the issue is of little importance, one way or the other.

Here are some data on what teachers were seen to be doing. In January 1981 (4 months after the project started) 216 Nova teachers responded to item #2.

#2. As you see it, what are your school's teachers and administrators doing now? (Mark only one)

Nova Teachers - Jan. 81

EL	MD	HI	ALL		
9%	17%	39%	22%	A.	Most are not concerned about sex role stereotyping.
11%	33%	26%	21%	B.	Most watch for problems but seldom get "involved."
80%	50%	24%	56%	C.	Most try to eliminate sex role stereotyping.
0%	0%	2%	1%	D.	Most say boys & girls should be treated differently.
N = 85	43	88	216		

Over half of all Nova teachers saw their colleagues as trying to eliminate sex role stereotyping. An additional 21% were seen as passively supporting equity education. About an equal number were seen as unconcerned, and a negligible number were seen as opposing sex equity efforts. Clearly these teachers were testifying that they saw teachers and administrators already supporting and even actually engaged in eliminating sex role stereotyping.

It should be noted that the effort was much more apparent to the teachers in the elementary schools than in the high schools.

During the second year of the National Sex Equity Demonstration Project nine new schools were added to the four Nova schools as demonstration schools. We called them the "new ring schools." Weekly testing of a few teachers (a multiple time sampling procedure) was used to determine trends in teacher perceptions. The response rate was irregular, but for those responding we noted changes in teacher perceptions of their colleagues activity as the demonstration project's work became more apparent. Responses were summed for each month for teachers at the Nova complex and the "new ring" schools respectively.* See Figure 2.

---

*Teachers at non-project schools did not face this item. Comparisons between Nova and Ring teachers were made recognizing Nova's greater length of experience with the project.

The results for Nova teachers were pretty much the same as they had been the previous January (1981). If there was a trend at all at Nova it was to perceive slightly increasing equity activism.

At the new ring schools, teachers responded similarly, observing slightly less activist behavior, slightly more passive behavior, but perhaps passive interest giving way to unconcern. But mostly the perceptions remained pretty much the same, with activism seen by project school teachers as the dominant behavior.

High school sophomores (in 1980-81) and Juniors (in 1981-82) were asked the same item. The results are shown in Figure 3. Half of them saw their teachers as unconcerned. Activism was seen at less than 20% but rising in the new ring schools. Active opposition seemed to be diminishing. But the dominant view was that the teachers were <u>not</u> actively engaged in eliminating sex role stereotyping.

This contrast between teacher and student perceptions as to what was going on points to one of the key issues in this project. Are these schools relatively free of equity problems, thanks partly to an alert teaching staff or are there many relevant problems that the teachers do not see? The project staff works on the latter hypothesis, as if the students view of activism were more accurate than that of the teachers themselves.

When interpreting item #1 we noted that project teachers felt that sex equity was an important educational issue and that discrimination was something of an obstacle to education in Broward County. On other items most of these teachers indicated that there is no problem in their own schools, especially with their own teaching. One school's sex equity coordinator, a first grade teacher, told us:

As you see it, what are your school's teachers and administrators doing about sex equity? (Check one that says it best)

C____Most try to eliminate sex role stereotyping.
B____Most watch for problems but seldom get involved.
A____Most are not concerned about this issue.
D____Most believe boys & girls should be treated differently.

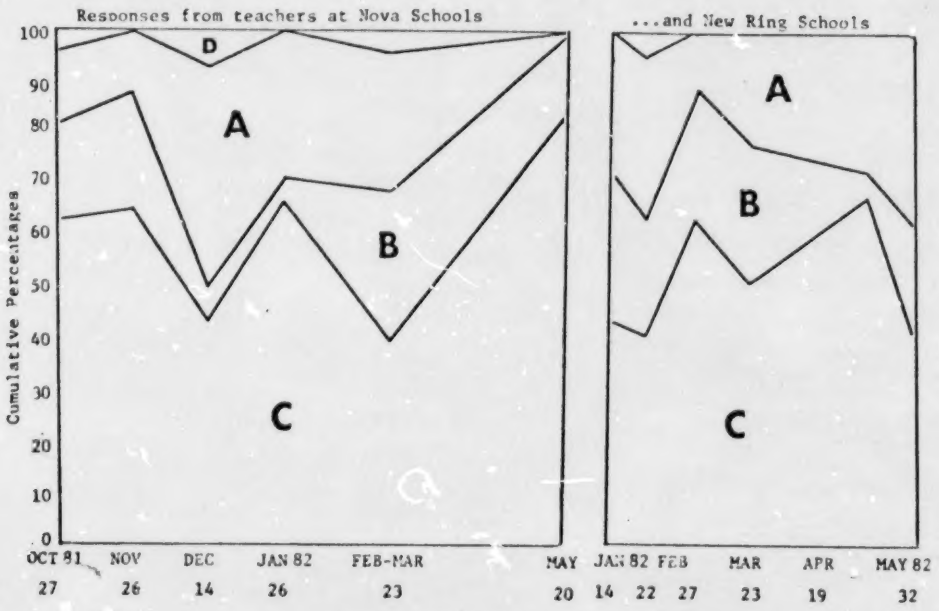


FIGURE 2 Nova and New Ring Teacher Perceptions of Faculty and Administration Involvement in Sex Equity

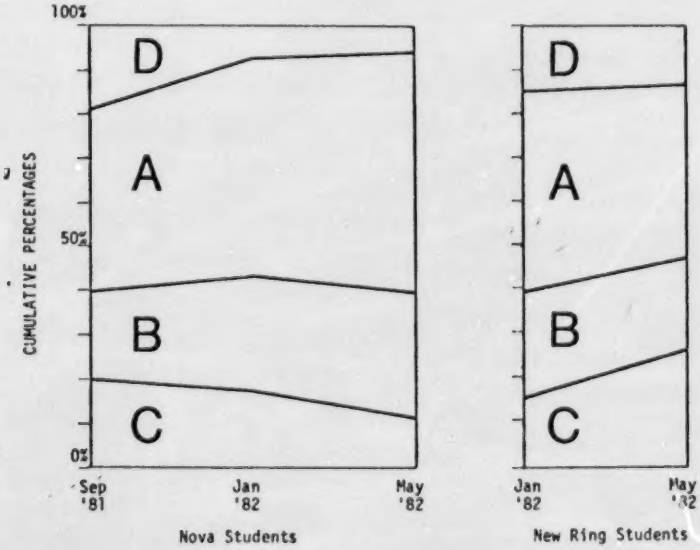


FIGURE 3. Nova and New Ring High School Juniors' responses to Item #2

> We had Joan and Hazel come out and show their film/slide/tape. They tried to get people sympathetic to the cause. That was a bit difficult because there is definitely a lackadaisical attitude here. It's hard to work with. There are some who do not feel that there is a problem and really don't want anything to do with the sex equity project."

In such voluntary workshops a few teachers were coming to realize that they themselves had been discriminating unintentionally. One said,

> I think many teachers have become newly aware of subtle discrimination. And that is the first step in making changes.

So some teachers were sensitized in ways the project people intended. But most teachers were not, seeing themselves as actively working to eliminate sex role stereotyping, seeing themselves as succeeding. A way out of this staff development dilemma was not apparent, but the dilemma was made much clearer by the survey items used to record staff and student perceptions.